

Developing professionalism through self-reflexive research: two accounts of practitioner research in music performance and education

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In this joint presentation two musician-researchers doing a PhD in the Arts explain how they employ their own practice in a self-reflexive context in order to lay out and further develop their own “personal interpretative framework” (Kelchtermans, 1994, 2013). Author 1 is a music educator who conducts her research in a non-formal educational music project with as its principle aim to explore her own professional development when coaching musical creation processes with children. Author 2 is a violinist who investigates the gazing behaviour of musicians in a chamber music context, combining data on her own practice with data on that of others. Both PhD projects are similar in that they combine their practice (and observational data) with their views on their respective professions (via self-reflections). Interestingly, the emphasis of both researchers is slightly different. The first author’s self-reflections are rather future-oriented: the aim is to stimulate her professional development by systematically confronting her personal interpretative framework with her “enacted professionalism” (Kelchtermans & Vanassche, 2014). The second author uses her own practice to discover, remember and develop a personal (aesthetical) stance toward gaze behaviour, an obscure aspect of chamber music practice. Admittedly, in both projects the researchers’ practices as well as their views on practice undergo changes through the research. By presenting recognisable accounts of their developments, they eventually hope to enhance the learning processes of their peers. Both presenters discuss their research methods in detail, while exploring the ways their practitioner research links with the broad spectrum of “mesearch”. Indeed, their projects contain dimensions of self-study (Lassonde, Galman & Kosnik, 2009), autoethnography (Austin & Hickey, 2007; Vasconcelos, 2011), interpretive research (Radnor, 2001) and narrative writing (Riessman, 2008). They will especially endeavour to address the opportunities and frictions that arise when trying to apply the ‘ethno’ and the ‘graphy’ of ‘autoethnography’ to their own research.

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